

September 20, 2005

MEMORANDUM

TO: All State Employees

FR: Mollie Anderson, Director, Department of Administrative Services

RE: Frequently Asked Questions for Volunteers

Thank you for your overwhelming response to the Governor's call for volunteers to assist with the efforts in the Gulf Coast States. Over 700 state employees have volunteered. This speaks to the generous and caring attitude of state employees. I see this all the time as state employees carry out their normal duties, but it is particularly noteworthy in times of need.

Following is some text that will answer many of the questions you have been asking. The names of all volunteers are being forwarded to the Red Cross through Iowa's Homeland Security Office. The Red Cross will call volunteers for service by matching the jobs that need to be done with your skill areas. **If you volunteer through the Red Cross and are asked to serve, you must have your supervisor's approval to be away from work, and you must use your vacation, earned compensatory time, or leave without pay. If you are deployed by the Governor as a work assignment, you will not have to take vacation, but will be on work time.**

Again, thank you for volunteering. If you have any questions that are not addressed below, please contact your supervisor. Your DAS Human Resources Enterprise Personnel Officer will be available to help supervisors with questions.

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: Does the Governor have authority to allow employees wanting to volunteer to remain in pay status?

Answer: As the Chief Executive for the State, the Governor has the legal right to determine how and where resources are employed. While the immediate devastation did not affect Iowa, the residual affects of this disaster will have the potential to greatly affect the economy of Iowa and its citizens. The type of effort associated with this response does constitute an emergency situation and national disaster requiring an extraordinary response by the State of Iowa. As such, employees of the State possessing certain skills and abilities applicable to the relief effort will be designated by the Governor's office as delegates of the official State response to the relief effort. Additionally, the State is member of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact which provides for sharing of resources between compact members for responses to declared emergencies. Statutory authority for the compact is addressed at § 29C.21 of the Code of Iowa.

Question: If selected as a member of the official Iowa relief delegation, how will I be notified?

Answer: Management of the employing department will notify participating employees.

Question: Must I possess specific needed skills in order to be designated a member of the official response team?

Answer: Yes, designation to the official response will be determined by accessing the needs of the state requesting services and the skills of employees within State government. As such, only employees possessing the specific skills necessary to meet the needs of the designated response team will be considered for assignments and deployed to the relief effort.

Question: If I have specific skills needed to address the needs of the relief effort, but am not selected as member of the official state relief delegation, can I still volunteer?

Answer: Yes, while the Governor is committed to providing an official response to the relief effort, other employees may volunteer to assist in the relief efforts. Individuals who submitted their names in response to the Governor's September 2nd memo have been forwarded to the Division of Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management (IHSEM). Those names will be given to the American Red Cross. The Red Cross will contact volunteers with the skills that are needed.

Question: If I volunteer will I be guaranteed an assignment?

Answer: No, an assessment of the types of skills and the need for volunteers in each area must be completed to ensure that volunteers are not assigned in excess of the number of individuals required to perform the necessary services. If all employees who wish to volunteer are allowed to participate the result could be that the relief agencies will be overburdened with the administrative task of reviewing skills and providing room and board for more volunteers than the organization and the effort requires.

Question: If I am selected as a member of the official relief delegation, will I be in paid status for all hours involved in the response?

Answer: Employees selected as members of the State's relief delegation, deployed by the Governor, will be compensated at the regular rate of pay for the hours typically scheduled to work. Provisions of the collective bargaining agreements and the Fair Labor Standards Act will pertain to all work hours including payment of overtime or conversion of such hours to compensatory time.

Question: If I volunteer for the relief effort and am selected by an organization providing disaster relief will I remain in pay status.

Answer: Yes, if the volunteer has approval of the appointing authority (i.e. employing department) and the employee has sufficient accrued vacation or compensatory time to cover the period of volunteer service. However, if the employee is released to participate in the relief effort and does not have sufficient accrued leave to cover the period of absence the employee will be considered to be on leave of absence without pay. Only employees selected as a member of the official State delegation to the relief effort will be continued in regular pay status for the duration of the employee's deployment to the relief effort.

Question: If I am deployed to the relief efforts how will my pay be handled for purposes of completing a timesheet and receiving my regular pay?

Answer: If accepted as a volunteer local management of the appointing authority will be expected to complete the processing of time sheets treating the regularly scheduled hours of work as work time or approved leave. If the employee currently does not have direct deposit of their payroll warrant the warrant issued for the pay period will be mailed to the employee's last known mailing address by the employing department.

Question: What will happen to my benefits if I am selected and deployed?

Answer: Employees selected as members of the official State delegation will continue to accrue vacation and sick leave, and all regular benefits associated with State employment will be continued. Employees selected as volunteers of a designated relief agency will continue to receive all regular State benefits while on approved vacation or compensatory time. If the deployed volunteering employee exhausts available paid leave health, dental, and life insurance benefits will continue for a period of thirty days following the exhaustion of the paid leave of absence.

Question: If accepted as a volunteer how will I be transported to the area assigned and will I be reimbursed for meals and lodging?

Answer: Each member of the official delegation will be assigned to a specific task directly related to the governmental response to the relief effort. If deployed to one of the disaster or evacuation areas outside Iowa, transportation will be coordinated by the state requesting the resources, an assigned relief agency, or the federal government. Meals and lodging will be the responsibility of the agency to which the volunteer is assigned. For employees assigned to the official delegation and assigned to an agency or effort within Iowa, the usual rules regarding reimbursement for mileage, meals, and lodging will be apply to employees assigned. Volunteers assigned to a local agency relief effort will not be eligible for reimbursement of mileage or meals by the State, but may be eligible for reimbursement by the relief agency. Additionally, it is possible that such expenses may be considered an expense that would be deductible on the volunteer's individual tax

return. These volunteers should seek guidance on that matter from either the Internal Revenue Service or their personal tax preparer.

Question: If an employee becomes ill or injured, how will that be handled?

Answer: If assigned to a relief agency providing services in another state, employees will be provided medical care and services by that organization. Upon return to Iowa, employees may want to contact the health insurance provider to determine whether any payment may be available to offset the expenses of medical care rendered by the relief organization.

Question: Will the State of Iowa's Worker Compensation cover injuries and illness occurring during the employee's deployment?

Answer: Yes, if a member of the official relief delegation and the accident or illness is directly related to the work performed as a part of the relief effort. For volunteers accepted by a relief agency to participate in the relief effort, the employee will be considered on leave from employment and would not qualify for Worker Compensation benefits since the injury or illness would not directly arise from employment.

Question: How will my family be able to contact me while I am deployed?

Answer: Contact with volunteers will be accomplished through the relief agency.

Question: If serving as a volunteer in another state will there be an opportunity for me to return home prior to the conclusion of the assignment, and if so who will be responsible for the costs of transportation to and from the area?

Answer: It is anticipated that the deployment of volunteers will be temporary and as such volunteers would be expected to remain in the program to which assigned throughout the assignment. Return transportation will be coordinated by the assigned relief agency or the federal government at the conclusion of the assignment.

Question: If a volunteer employee gets to the area and determines that they cannot handle the work, are they allowed to return to Iowa sooner than originally scheduled?

Answer: Every effort will be made to ensure that volunteers accepted for this effort have the necessary skills, both professional and physical, to provide the necessary services deemed necessary by the relief agency to which assigned. As such, we do not anticipate that the volunteers selected will not be capable of performing the services assigned.

Question: Are physicals or certificate of fitness from a personal physician required?

Answer: No physical will be necessary. If selected as a volunteer the assigned relief agency will be responsible to ensure that volunteers are physically capable to perform the assigned duties. Additionally, in certain areas of the disaster it may be necessary for the

volunteer to have been vaccinated for certain types of diseases. In that case, the relief agency to which the volunteer is assigned will be responsible for ensuring that the volunteer is vaccinated.

Question: Do Chartered Agencies have increased flexibility in releasing employees to participate in the disaster relief effort?

Answer: No, the Governor's relief effort is designed to ensure that essential and critical services to the public are maintained, regardless of whether the employee works in a Charter Agency.

Question: The Code of Iowa and Iowa Administrative Code address disaster service leave, is that provision of law the basis for this relief effort?

Answer: No, the statutory and administrative rule provisions apply only to disasters within the State of Iowa. Since this effort is directed at providing relief to areas outside the geographic boundaries of the State of Iowa, neither the statute nor administrative rule apply.

Question: How does the request for volunteers affect employees who are also members of the Active Reserve or National Guard, will these employees be extended additional military leave if activated to military duty?

Answer: No, employees who are called to active duty will not be provided additional paid military leave beyond that provided by statute. However, employees called to active duty are eligible for monetary reimbursement to offset the difference in salary between the wages as a State employee and the military wages authorized by Senate File 75 enacted by the 81st General Assembly. Employees not called to active duty, and who possess the necessary skills will be eligible to volunteer for this program.

Question: Will I be considered an employee for the state for the purposes of the Iowa tort claims act?

Answer: Generally not. Since this is considered a humanitarian effort the liability for any tort claim will be the responsibility of either the relief agency or the federal government.